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READINGS BOOKLET



GRADE 12 DIPLOMA EXAMINATION

English 30

Part B: Reading (Multiple Choice)

January 1991

Alberta
EDUCATION

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**GRADE 12 DIPLOMA EXAMINATION
ENGLISH 30**

Part B: Reading (Multiple Choice)

READINGS BOOKLET

DESCRIPTION

Part B: Reading (Multiple Choice) contributes 50% of the total English 30 Diploma Examination mark.

There are 70 questions in the Questions Booklet and seven reading selections in the Readings Booklet.

Total time: 2 hours

INSTRUCTIONS

- Be sure that you have an English 30 Questions Booklet and an English 30 Readings Booklet.
- You may **NOT** use a dictionary, thesaurus, or other reference materials.

JANUARY 1991



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I. Questions 1 to 7 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

OVERCOATS

There is a dream of eternal warmth,
a strangle scarf, buttons that must
hold taut; there is an overcoat I wear
beyond my final prairie storm,
5 because taking it off I would only discover
another coat inside, and inside that another,
older, with frayed elastic cuffs,
then buried under it the Mackinaw¹ of
eleven pockets worn on my first date,
10 trying to win Elizabeth Holsinger, golden,
composed, the desire of every boy
at Sacred Heart School; there, in the recess
of some pocket as yet unexplored, I misplaced
the most important movie tickets.
15 But this time the endless, anxious crowd
at the Victory's matinee could at last
surge forward because we,
Liz taking my arm hard as I prove worthy,
could finally enter, though even
20 in the darkness she would see
I wore underneath my soft
rabbit fur collar of childhood;
she would laugh as I stuffed
it under the seat, but
25 there would be another and another:
they would become unbearably tighter as I
hurried, explaining there is no
end to the overcoats of childhood,
and if, but this could never happen,
30 I removed them all, she would only laugh
with all shrillness at the palest small body.
By then, everyone would be looking.

Larry Kramer
Contemporary American poet

¹Mackinaw — a short, double-breasted coat made of heavy woollen cloth

II. Questions 8 to 20 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from the novel *Housekeeping*.

from HOUSEKEEPING

The novel is set in Fingerbone, Idaho. In this excerpt, the narrator describes the time immediately following the death of her grandfather in a train derailment, which left her grandmother alone with three children. The other two women left widowed by this accident had found it emotionally necessary to leave Fingerbone.

It seems that my grandmother did not consider leaving. She had lived her whole life in Fingerbone. And though she never spoke of it, and no doubt seldom thought of it, she was a religious woman. That is to say that she conceived of life as a road down which one traveled, an easy enough road through a broad country, and that one's destination was there from the very beginning, a measured distance away, standing in the ordinary light like some plain house where one went in and was greeted by respectable people and was shown to a room where everything one had ever lost or put aside was gathered together, waiting. She accepted the idea that at some time she and my grandfather would meet and take up their lives again, without the worry of money, in a milder climate. She hoped that he would somehow have acquired a little more stability and common sense. With him this had so far not been an effect of age, and she distrusted the idea of transfiguration.¹ The bitter thing about his death, since she had a house and a pension and the children were almost grown, was that it seemed to her a kind of defection, not altogether unanticipated. How many times had she waked in the morning to find him gone? And sometimes for whole days he would walk around singing to himself in a thin voice, and speak to her and his children as a very civil man would speak to strangers. And now he had vanished finally. When they were reunited, she hoped he would be changed, substantially changed, but she did not set her heart on it. Musing thus, she set out upon her widowhood, and became altogether as good a widow as she had been a wife.

After their father's death, the girls hovered around her, watched everything she did, followed her through the house, got in her way. Molly was sixteen that winter; Helen, my mother, was fifteen; and Sylvie was thirteen. When their mother sat down with her mending, they would settle themselves around her on the floor, trying to be comfortable, with their heads propped against her knees or her chair, restless as young children. They would pull fringe off the rug, pleat her hem, pummel one another sometimes, while they talked indolently about school or worked out the endless minor complaints and accusations that arose among them. After a while they would turn on the radio and start brushing Sylvie's hair, which was light brown and heavy and hung down to her waist. The older girls were expert at building it into pompadours with ringlets at ear and nape. Sylvie crossed her legs at the ankles and read magazines. When she got sleepy she would go off to her room and take a nap, and come down to supper with her gorgeous hair rumpled and awry. Nothing could induce vanity in her.

When suppertime came, they would follow their mother into the kitchen, set the table, lift the lids off the pans. And then they would sit around the table and

Continued

¹transfiguration — changed form or appearance, usually one that exalts or idealizes. The term has religious connotations.

eat together, Molly and Helen fastidious, Sylvie with milk on her lip. Even then, in the bright kitchen with white curtains screening out the dark, their mother felt
40 them leaning toward her, looking at her face and her hands.

Never since they were small children had they clustered about her so, and never since then had she been so aware of the smell of their hair, their softness, breathiness, abruptness. It filled her with a strange elation, the same pleasure she had felt when any one of them, as a sucking child, had fastened her eyes on her
45 face and reached for her other breast, her hair, her lips, hungry to touch, eager to be filled for a while and sleep.

She had always known a thousand ways to circle them all around with what must have seemed like grace. She knew a thousand songs. Her bread was tender and her jelly was tart, and on rainy days she made cookies and applesauce. In
50 the summer she kept roses in a vase on the piano, huge, pungent roses, and when the blooms ripened and the petals fell, she put them in a tall Chinese jar, with cloves and thyme and sticks of cinnamon. Her children slept on starched sheets under layers of quilts, and in the morning her curtains filled with light the way
55 sails fill with wind. Of course they pressed her and touched her as if she had just returned after an absence. Not because they were afraid she would vanish as their father had done, but because his sudden vanishing had made them aware of her.

When she had been married a little while, she concluded that love was half a longing of a kind that possession did nothing to mitigate. Once, while they were
60 still childless, Edmund had found a pocket watch on the shore. The case and the crystal were undamaged, but the works were nearly consumed by rust. He opened the watch and emptied it, and where the face had been he fitted a circle of paper on which he had painted two seahorses. He gave it to her as a pendant, with a chain through it, but she hardly ever wore it because the chain was too short to
65 allow her to look at the seahorses comfortably. She worried that it would be damaged on her belt or in her pocket. For perhaps a week she carried the watch wherever she went, even across the room, and it was not because Edmund had made it for her, or because the painting was less vivid and awkward than his paintings usually were, but because the seahorses themselves were so arch,² so
70 antic and heraldic,³ and armored in the husks of insects. It was the seahorses themselves that she wanted to see as soon as she took her eyes away, and that she wanted to see even when she was looking at them. The wanting never subsided until something — a quarrel, a visit — took her attention away. In the same way her daughters would touch her and watch her and follow her, for a while.

Marilynne Robinson
Contemporary American novelist

²arch — pert, mischievous, mirthful

³heraldic — ceremonious, pompous

III. Questions 21 to 31 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

GIFTS

- Right now, my son is crying
because the T-shirt he bought me for my birthday
is a bit too small.
He has flung himself on his bed
5 and his sobs carry him out
and further away from me,
the sound of them sinking
into the noise of the party downstairs
like the stubborn intervals¹
10 that try to force a song apart.
- As for the shirt, it's not that small
and I'd wear it anyway,
because of the Mickey Mouse decal
he's had put on and my name, too
15 because he saved up for it
because I'm his mother
and he's my child, all that corny truth
that would have been enough
even a year ago
20 and isn't now.
- He can see for himself how it wrinkles
under the armpits and clings
to my shoulderblades.
He can see it's not my style,
25 just as he knows he can't exchange it.
Can't take it back can't take it back;
it's the chill of that, for the first time,
laying its damp yellow touch
on the fine brown arm of his love,
30 like the words we let fly
in the midst of an argument,
how they natter, dry birds,
in some empty room of the brain
for years to come.
- 35 It seems all summer I have watched
this growing in him, seen it rise,
unbidden as that gesture he has for impatience,
my own, made with his father's hands.
Seen it glistening like oil on his skin

Continued

¹intervals — in music, the difference in pitch between two sounds

40 as he measures himself for the world,
studying how the older boys
dive from the raft at the cottage
and then, alone, practicing all morning
the way his dad might concentrate
45 on the tongue and groove of a shelf, the slide
of a desk drawer, a perfect fit,
taking to this adult life
the way a turtle takes to water, lithe and quick
the minute it leaves the sand.
50 But when the big boys
rocked the raft until it flipped,
a huge thing, coming down
in a crash of water, shouts
from the beach, I saw him
55 in the shallows with the younger kids,
small against that spinning instant
when you'd have to jump free
or get your head bashed in
(how you'd have to be sure
60 you could, sure
as you could be),
saw the grey pinch of his cheeks
as he entered this knowledge
the way he'd enter
65 any other element, that first breath
that took him from me
stinging his lungs,

or when, as now
he returns for a while
70 from wherever his crying took him,
grinning up at me in this crazy shirt,
the cost of it already pinned to his chest
an old badge, so that soon
we will return together to the party
75 which is for my birthday, the day
when we begin to learn all this,
taking a lifetime just to recognize ourselves
and one day
from that whole terrible journey
80 to celebrate it.

Bronwen Wallace
Contemporary Canadian poet

IV. Questions 32 to 42 in your Questions Booklet are based on this essay.

VOLTAIRE AND FREDERICK THE GREAT

This essay was written in wartime London, 1941.

Two hundred years ago a Frenchman paid a visit to a German. It is a famous visit. The Frenchman was delighted to come to Germany, his German host delighted to welcome him. They were more than polite to one another, they were enthusiastic, and each thought, "I am sure we are going to be friends for ever." Yet the visit
5 was a disaster. They still talk about it in Germany today, and they say it was the Frenchman's fault. And they still talk about it in France. And I'm going to talk about it now, partly because it makes such a good story, and partly because it contains a lesson for us all, even though it did happen two hundred years back.

The Frenchman was Voltaire. People today sometimes think of Voltaire as a
10 person who sneered at everything, and made improper jokes. He was much more than that, he was the greatest man of his age, indeed he was one of the greatest men whom European civilization has produced. If I had to name two people to speak for Europe at the Last Judgment I should choose Shakespeare and Voltaire — Shakespeare for his creative genius, Voltaire for his critical genius and humanity.
15 Voltaire cared for the truth, he believed in tolerance, he pitied the oppressed, and since he was a forceful character he was able to drive his ideas home. They happen to be my own ideas, and like many other small people I am thankful when a great person comes along and says for me what I can't say properly for myself. Voltaire speaks for the thousands and thousands of us who hate injustice and work
20 for a better world.

What did he do? He wrote enormously: plays (now forgotten); short stories, and some of them are still read. He was a journalist, and a pamphleteer, he dabbled in science and philosophy, he was a good popular historian, he compiled a dictionary, and he wrote hundreds of letters to people all over Europe. He had
25 correspondents everywhere, and he was so witty, so up-to-date, so on the spot that kings and emperors were proud to get a letter from Voltaire and hurried to answer it with their own hand. He is not a great creative artist. But he is a great man with a powerful intellect and a warm heart, enlisted in the service of humanity. That is why I rank him with Shakespeare as a spiritual spokesman for Europe.
30 Two hundred years before the Nazis came, he was the complete anti-Nazi.

I am so fond of him that I should like to add he had a perfect character. Alas, he hadn't! He was a bundle of contradictions and nerves. Although he loved truth he often lied. Although he loved humanity he was often malicious. Though
35 generous he was a money-maker. He was a born tease. He had no dignity. And he was no beauty to look at either — a gibbering monkey of a man, very small, very thin, with a long sharp nose, a bad complexion and beady black eyes. He overdressed, as little people sometimes do, and his wig was so large that it seemed to extinguish him.

That is the Frenchman who sets out for Berlin on June 13, 1751; the German
40 whom he is about to visit is Frederick the Great, King of Prussia.

Frederick is one of the founders of modern Germany, and Hitler has made a careful study of him. He plunged Europe into wars to advance his ambitions.

Continued

He believed in force and fraud and cruelty, and in doing everything himself. He had a genius for organising, he preferred to employ inferior men, and he despised
45 the human race. That is the dividing line between him and Voltaire. Voltaire believed in humanity. Frederick did not. "You don't know this damned race of men," he once exclaimed. "You don't know them. I do." He was a cynic, and having had a very unhappy childhood he felt till the end of his life that he had not been properly appreciated; and we know how dangerous such men can be,
50 and what miseries they can bring upon themselves and others.

But there was another side to Frederick. He was a cultivated, sensitive gentleman. He was a good musician, he had read widely, and he had made a careful study of French. He even composed a number of French poems — they are not good, still they serve to show that to him German wasn't everything. He
55 was, in this way, more civilised than Hitler. There was no Nordic purity nonsense about him. He did not think that Germany was destined to rule the world: he knew that the world is a very complicated place, and that we have to live and let live in it; he even believed in freedom of speech. "People can say what they like as long as I do what I like" was the way he put it. One day, as he went
60 through Berlin he saw a caricature of himself on a wall, and all he said was: "Oh — hang it down lower so that it can be seen better."

The visit began in a whirl of compliments. Voltaire called Frederick "The Solomon of the North,"¹ Frederick declared that of all his victorious titles the most precious was Possessor of Voltaire. He made his guest a court official, housed
65 him royally, gave him a handsome salary, and promised an extra salary to his niece, Madame Denis, if she would come to keep house for him. (We shall hear more of poor Madame Denis in a minute.) Witty conversation, philosophic discussion, delicious food — Frederick liked good food, though he was careful to get it cheap. Everything seemed perfect — but! Not long after his arrival, Voltaire wrote a
70 letter to a friend in France in which the ominous little word "But" keeps occurring.

"The supper parties are delicious. The King is the life of the company. But. I have operas and comedies, reviews and concerts, my studies and books. But, but. Berlin is fine, the princesses charming, the maids of honour handsome. But." We can interpret this But. It is the instinctive protest of the free man who finds
75 himself in the power of a tyrant. Voltaire, for all his faults, was a free man. Frederick had charm and intelligence. But — he was a tyrant.

The visit went very slowly. Voltaire did several tiresome things. He got mixed up in a shady financial transaction, he quarrelled with another Frenchman who was in the king's service, he drank too much chocolate, and when the king rationed
80 him he revenged himself by taking the wax candles out of the candlesticks and selling them. All very undignified. And — worst of all — he laughed at the king's French poems. Frederick, like Hitler, fancied himself as an artist, and he had often employed his guest to polish his verses up. Now he was told that the tiresome little monkey was poking fun at him and quoting him all over the place — a
85 serious matter this, for some of the poems were imprudent, and intended for private circulation only. The Solomon of the North was vexed. He thought: "No doubt my visitor is a genius, but he is making more trouble than he's worth, and he's disloyal." And Voltaire thought: "No doubt my host is a mighty monarch, but I

Continued

¹"The Solomon of the North" — Solomon, an ancient king of Israel noted for his wisdom

would rather worship him from a distance.” He left Berlin, after a stay of two
90 years, which had gradually become more and more uncomfortable for both parties.

But that is not the end. The real bust-up was yet to come. It occurred at
Frankfurt, where Voltaire was waiting for Madame Denis to join him. Frankfurt
did not belong to the King of Prussia. He had no legal authority there at all, but
he had his “Gestapo” and he worked through them to interfere with personal
95 liberty. He discovered that Voltaire had taken away from Berlin (it seems by
accident) a copy of the wretched French poems, flew into a passion and ordered
Voltaire’s luggage to be searched. As always, he employed second-rate people and
they went too far. They not only searched Voltaire’s luggage but they imprisoned
him and bullied him night and day in the hope of extracting information which
100 would please their royal master. It is an incredible affair, a real foretaste of Nazi
methods. Voltaire tried to escape; he was stopped at the gates of Frankfurt and
dragged back, and Madame Denis, who now arrived to join her uncle, was also
arrested and ill-treated. Madame Denis was a stout, emotional lady, with some
pretensions as an actress. She was not one to suffer in silence and she soon made
105 Europe ring with her protests. Voltaire’s health broke down and he feigned to be
more ill than he really was: he ran from his tormentors into an inner room and
gasped, “Will you not even allow me to be sick?” His secretary rushed up to
assist him, and Voltaire, while making all the motion of vomiting, whispered in
his ear, “I am pretending! I am pretending!” He loved fooling people; he could
110 be mischievous even in his misery, and this is to me an endearing trait.

Frederick saw things had gone too far. Voltaire and his niece were released,
and in later years the two great men corresponded almost as enthusiastically as
before. But they were careful not to meet and Voltaire at all events had learnt a
lesson. Berlin had taught him that if a man believes in liberty and variety and
115 tolerance and sympathy he cannot breathe the air of the totalitarian state. It all
may seem nice upon the surface — but! The tyrant may be charming and intelligent
— but! The machinery may work perfectly — but! Something is missing: the human
spirit is missing. Voltaire kept faith with the human spirit. He fought its battle
against German dictatorship two hundred years before our time.

E.M. Forster
British novelist and essayist
1879-1970

V. Questions 43 to 51 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from the play *Troilus and Cressida*.

from **TROILUS AND CRESSIDA**, Act II, Scene ii

CHARACTERS:

Priam	— King of Troy
Hector	} — sons of King Priam
Troilus	
Helenus	
Paris	
Cassandra	— daughter of King Priam

The war between the Trojans and the Greeks began when the Trojan prince Paris abducted the Greek queen Helen. The Greeks retaliated by laying siege to the city of Troy. The setting for the following scene is a room in King Priam's palace in besieged Troy. Priam and his sons Hector, Troilus, and Helenus are presenting their positions on continuing the war.

PRIAM: After so many hours, lives, speeches spent,

Thus once again says Nestor from the Greeks:

'Deliver Helen, and all damage else —

As honour, loss of time, travail, expense,

5 Wounds, friends, and what else dear that is consumed

In hot digestion of this cormorant¹ war —

Shall be struck off.' Hector, what say you to't?

HECTOR: . . . Let Helen go:

Since the first sword was drawn about this question,

10 Every tithe² soul, 'mongst many thousand dismes,³

Hath been as dear as Helen; I mean, of ours:

If we have lost so many tenths of ours,

To guard a thing not ours nor worth to us,

Had it our name, the value of one ten,

15 What merit's in that reason which denies

The yielding of her up?

TROILUS: Fie, fie, my brother!

Weigh you the worth and honour of a king

So great as our dread father in a scale

20 Of common ounces? . . . fie, for godly shame!

HELENUS: No marvel, though you bite so sharp at reasons,

You are so empty of them. Should not our father

Bear the great sway of his affairs with reasons,

Because your speech hath none that tells him so?

25 **TROILUS:** You are for dreams and slumbers, brother priest;

You fur your gloves with reason. Here are your reasons:

Continued

¹cormorant — a gluttonous bird

²tithe — a tenth

³disme — a tenth

You know an enemy intends you harm;
 You know a sword employ'd is perilous,
 And reason flies the object of all harm:
 30 Who marvels then, when Helenus beholds
 A Grecian and his sword, if he do set
 The very wings of reason to his heels
 And fly like chidden Mercury from Jove,
 Or like a star disorb'd? Nay, if we talk of reason,
 35 Let's shut our gates and sleep: . . .
 Reason and respect
 Make livers pale⁴ and lustihood deject.
HECTOR: Brother, she is not worth what she doth cost
 The holding.
 40 **TROILUS:** What is aught, but as 'tis valued?
HECTOR: But value dwells not in particular will;⁵
 It holds his estimate and dignity
 As well wherein 'tis precious of itself
 As in the prizer: 'tis mad idolatry
 45 To make the service greater than the god . . .
TROILUS: . . . There can be no evasion
 To blench from this and to stand firm by honour:
 We turn not back the silks upon the merchant,
 When we have soil'd them . . .
 50 It was thought meet
 Paris should do some vengeance on the Greeks:
 Your breath of full consent bellied his sails . . .
 If you'll confess he brought home noble prize —
 As you must needs, for you all clapp'd your hands,
 55 And cried 'Inestimable!' — why do you now
 The issue of your proper wisdoms rate⁶ . . . ?
CASSANDRA (*Within*): Cry, Trojans, cry!
PRIAM: What noise? what shriek is this?
TROILUS: 'Tis our mad sister. I do know her voice.
 60 (*Enter CASSANDRA, raving*)
CASSANDRA: Cry, Trojans, cry! Lend me ten thousand eyes,
 And I will fill them with prophetic tears. . . .
 Virgins and boys, mid-age and wrinkled eld,
 Soft infancy, that nothing canst but cry,
 65 Add to my clamours! . . .
 Cry, Trojans, cry! practise your eyes with tears!
 Troy must not be, nor goodly Ilion stand;
 Our firebrand brother, Paris, burns us all.
 Cry, Trojans, cry! a Helen and a woe:
 70 Cry, cry! Troy burns, or else let Helen go. [Exit]

William Shakespeare

⁴Make livers pale — the liver was regarded as the seat of passion or desire

⁵particular will — the individual's will

⁶rate — condemn (from "berate")

VI. Questions 52 to 60 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from the play *Caesar and Cleopatra*, Act IV.

from CAESAR AND CLEOPATRA, by Bernard Shaw

CHARACTERS:

Rufio — a Roman officer, adviser to Julius Caesar

Caesar — Julius Caesar, ruler of the Roman Empire (48-44 BC)

Pothinus — Egyptian leader, guardian of the young King Ptolemy

Cleopatra — sixteen-year-old Queen of Egypt

Ftataetea — chief nurse to Cleopatra

The setting is the palace in Alexandria, Egypt. Cleopatra is not yet firmly established as the Queen of Egypt; her younger brother, Ptolemy, also has a claim to the throne. Ptolemy is supported by those who believe in Egypt for the Egyptians, and Cleopatra is supported by the Roman general, Julius Caesar, whose army has just conquered the Egyptians.

RUFIO (*Calling*): Ho there, guard! Release your man and send him up. (*Beckoning*)
Come along! (**POTHINUS** enters and stops mistrustfully between the two, looking from one to the other.)

CAESAR (*Graciously*): Ah, Pothinus! You are welcome. And what is the news
5 this afternoon?

POTHINUS: Caesar, I come to warn you of a danger, and to make you an offer.

CAESAR: Never mind the danger. Make the offer.

RUFIO: Never mind the offer. What's the danger?

POTHINUS: Caesar, you think that Cleopatra is devoted to you.

10 **CAESAR** (*Gravely*): My friend, I already know what I think. Come to your offer.

POTHINUS: I will deal plainly. I know not by what strange gods you have been
enabled to defend a palace and a few yards of beach against a city and an
army. Since we cut you off from Lake Mareotis, and you dug wells in the
salt sea sand and brought up buckets of fresh water from them, we have
15 known that your gods are irresistible, and that you are a worker of miracles.
I no longer threaten you —

RUFIO (*Sarcastically*): Very handsome of you, indeed.

POTHINUS: So be it: you are the master. Our gods sent the north west winds
to keep you in our hands; but you have been too strong for them.

20 **CAESAR** (*Gently urging him to come to the point*): Yes, yes, my friend. But
what then?

RUFIO: Spit it out, man. What have you to say?

POTHINUS: I have to say that you have a traitress in your camp. Cleopatra —
A SERVANT (*At the table, announcing*): The Queen! (**CAESAR** and **RUFIO** rise.)

25 **RUFIO** (*Aside to POTHINUS*): You should have spat it out sooner, you fool.
Now it is too late. (**CLEOPATRA**, in gorgeous raiment, enters in state
through the gap in the colonnade, and comes down past the image of Ra¹
and past the table to **CAESAR**. Her retinue, headed by **FTATATEETA**, joins

Continued

¹Ra — ancient Egyptian sun god

- the staff at the table. CAESAR gives CLEOPATRA his seat, which she takes.)*
- 30 **CLEOPATRA** (*Quickly, seeing POTHINUS*): What is he doing here?
CAESAR (*Seating himself beside her, in the most amiable of tempers*): Just going to tell me something about you. You shall hear it. Proceed, Pothinus.
POTHINUS (*Disconcerted*): Caesar — (*he stammers*)
CAESAR: Well, out with it.
- 35 **POTHINUS**: What I have to say is for your ear, not for the Queen's.
CLEOPATRA (*With subdued ferocity*): There are means of making you speak. Take care.
POTHINUS (*Defiantly*): Caesar does not employ those means.
CAESAR: My friend: when a man has anything to tell in this world, the difficulty
- 40 is not to make him tell it, but to prevent him from telling it too often. Let me celebrate my birthday by setting you free. Farewell: we shall not meet again.
CLEOPATRA (*Angrily*): Caesar, this mercy is foolish.
POTHINUS (*To CAESAR*): Will you not give me a private audience? Your life
- 45 may depend on it. (*CAESAR rises loftily.*)
RUFIO (*Aside to POTHINUS*): Ass! Now we shall have some heroics.
CAESAR (*Oratorically*):² Pothinus —
RUFIO (*Interrupting him*): Caesar, the dinner will spoil if you begin preaching your favorite sermon about life and death.
- 50 **CLEOPATRA** (*Priggishly*):³ Peace, Rufio. I desire to hear Caesar.
RUFIO (*Bluntly*): Your Majesty has heard it before. You repeated it to Apollodorus last week; and he thought it was all your own. (*CAESAR's dignity collapses. Much tickled, he sits down again and looks roguishly at CLEOPATRA, who is furious. RUFIO calls as before.*) Ho there, guard! Pass the prisoner out.
- 55 He is released. (*To POTHINUS*) Now off with you. You have lost your chance.
POTHINUS (*His temper overcoming his prudence*): I will speak.
CAESAR (*To CLEOPATRA*): You see. Torture would not have wrung a word from him.
- 60 **POTHINUS**: Caesar, you have taught Cleopatra the arts by which the Romans govern the world.
CAESAR: Alas! they cannot even govern themselves. What then?
POTHINUS: What then? Are you so besotted with her beauty that you do not see that she is impatient to reign in Egypt alone, and that her heart is set
- 65 on your departure?
CLEOPATRA (*Rising*): Liar!
CAESAR (*Shocked*): What! Protestations! Contradictions!
CLEOPATRA (*Ashamed, but trembling with suppressed rage*): No. I do not deign to contradict. Let him talk. (*She sits down again.*)
- 70 **POTHINUS**: From her own lips I have heard it. You are to be her catspaw: you are to tear the crown from her brother's head and set it on her own, delivering us all into her hand — delivering yourself also. And then Caesar can return to Rome, or depart through the gate of death, which is nearer and surer.
CAESAR (*Calmly*): Well, my friend; and is not this very natural?
- 75 **POTHINUS** (*Astonished*): Natural! Then you do not resent treachery?

Continued

²*Oratorically* — in the manner of an orator or grand speaker

³*Priggishly* — smugly, with annoying preciseness

CAESAR: Resent! O thou foolish Egyptian, what have I to do with resentment? Do I resent the wind when it chills me, or the night when it makes me stumble in the darkness? Shall I resent youth when it turns from age, and ambition when it turns from servitude? To tell me such a story as this is but to tell me that the sun will rise tomorrow.

80

CLEOPATRA (*Unable to contain herself*): But it is false — false. I swear it.

CAESAR: It is true, though you swore it a thousand times, and believed all you swore. (*She is convulsed with emotion. To screen her, he rises and takes POTHINUS to RUFIO, saying*) Come, Rufio: let us see Pothinus past the guard. I have a word to say to him. (*Aside to them*) We must give the Queen a moment to recover herself. (*Aloud*) Come. (*He takes POTHINUS and RUFIO out with him, conversing with them meanwhile.*) Tell your friends, Pothinus, that they must not think I am opposed to a reasonable settlement of the country's affairs — (*They pass out of hearing.*)

85

90 **CLEOPATRA** (*In a stifled whisper*): Ftatateeta, Ftatateeta.

FTATATEETA (*Hurrying to her from the table and petting her*): Peace, child: be comforted —

CLEOPATRA (*Interrupting her*): Can they hear us?

FTATATEETA: No, dear heart, no.

95 **CLEOPATRA:** Listen to me. If he leaves the Palace alive, never see my face again.

FTATATEETA: He? Poth —

CLEOPATRA (*Striking her on the mouth*): Strike his life out as I strike his name from your lips. Dash him down from the wall. Break him on the stones. Kill, kill, kill him.

100

FTATATEETA (*Shewing all her teeth*): The dog shall perish.

CLEOPATRA: Fail in this, and you go out from before me for ever.

FTATATEETA (*Resolutely*): So be it. You shall not see my face until his eyes are darkened. (*CAESAR comes back with RUFIO.*)

105 **CLEOPATRA** (*To FTATATEETA*): Come soon — soon. (*FTATATEETA turns her meaning eyes for a moment on her mistress; then goes grimly away past Ra and out. CLEOPATRA runs like a gazelle to CAESAR.*) So you have come back to me, Caesar. (*Caressingly*) I thought you were angry.

George Bernard Shaw
British dramatist and critic
1856-1950

VII. Questions 61 to 70 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from the book *The Firmament of Time*.

THE BIRD AND THE SNAKE

“The special value of science,” a perceptive philosopher once wrote, “lies not in what it makes of the world, but in what it makes of the knower.” Some years ago, while camping in a vast eroded area in the West, I came upon one of those unlikely sights which illuminate such truths.

5 I suppose that nothing living had moved among those great stones for centuries. They lay toppled against each other like fallen dolmens.¹ The huge stones were beasts, I used to think, of a kind man ordinarily lived too fast to understand. They seemed inanimate because the tempo of the life in them was slow. They lived ages in one place and moved only when man was not looking. Sometimes at night
10 I would hear a low rumble as one drew itself into a new position and subsided again. Sometimes I found their tracks ground deeply into the hillsides.

It was with considerable surprise that while traversing this barren valley I came, one afternoon, upon what I can only describe as a very remarkable sight. Some distance away, so far that for a little space I could make nothing of the
15 spectacle, my eyes were attracted by a dun-colored object about the size of a football, which periodically bounded up from the desert floor. Wonderingly, I drew closer and observed that something ropelike which glittered in the sun appeared to be dangling from the ball-shaped object. Whatever the object was, it appeared to be bouncing faster and more desperately as I approached. My surroundings were
20 such that this hysterical dance of what at first glance appeared to be a common stone was quite unnerving, as though suddenly all the natural objects in the valley were about to break into a jig. Going closer, I penetrated the mystery.

The sun was sparkling on the scales of a huge blacksnake which was partially looped about the body of a hen pheasant. Desperately the bird tried to rise, and
25 just as desperately the big snake coiled and clung, though each time the bird, falling several feet, was pounding the snake’s body in the gravel. I gazed at the scene in astonishment. Here in this silent waste, like an emanation from nowhere, two bitter and desperate vapors, two little whirlwinds of contending energy, were beating each other to death because their plans — something, I suspected, about
30 whether a clutch of eggs was to turn into a thing with wings or scales — this problem, I say, of the onrushing nonexistent future, had catapulted serpent against bird.

The bird was too big for the snake to have had it in mind as prey. Most probably, he had been intent on stealing the pheasant’s eggs and had been set
35 upon and pecked. Somehow in the ensuing scuffle he had flung a loop over the bird’s back and partially blocked her wings. She could not take off, and the snake would not let go. The snake was taking a heavy battering among the stones, but the high-speed metabolism and tremendous flight exertion of the mother bird were rapidly exhausting her. I stood a moment and saw the bloodshot glaze deepen in
40 her eyes. I suppose I could have waited there to see what would happen when

Continued

¹dolmens — ancient tombs or monuments with large flat stones laid on top of upright ones

she could not fly; I suppose it might have been worth scientifically recording. But I could not stand that ceaseless, bloody pounding in the gravel. I thought of the eggs somewhere about, and whether they were to elongate and writhe into an armor of scales, or eventually to go whistling into the wind with their wild mother.

45 So I, the mammal, in my way supple, and less bound by instinct, arbitrated the matter. I unwound the serpent from the bird and let him hiss and wrap his battered coils around my arm. The bird, her wings flung out, rocked on her legs and gasped repeatedly. I moved away in order not to drive her further from her nest. Thus the serpent and I, two terrible and feared beings, passed quickly out
50 of view.

Over the next ridge, where he could do no more damage, I let the snake, whose anger had subsided, slowly uncoil and slither from my arm. He flowed away into a little patch of bunch grass — aloof, forgetting, unaware of the journey he had made upon my wrist, which throbbed from his expert constriction. The
55 bird had contended for birds against the oncoming future; the serpent writhing into the bunch grass had contended just as desperately for serpents. And I, the apparition in that valley — for what had I contended? — I who contained the serpent and the bird and who read the past long written in their bodies.

Slowly, as I sauntered dwarfed among overhanging pinnacles, as the great
60 slabs which were the visible remnants of past ages laid their enormous shadows rhythmically as life and death across my face, the answer came to me. Man could contain more than himself. Among these many appearances that flew, or swam in the waters, or wavered momentarily into being, man alone possessed that unique ability.

65 The Renaissance thinkers were right when they said that man, the Microcosm, contains the Macrocosm. I had touched the lives of creatures other than myself and had seen their shapes waver and blow like smoke through the corridors of time. I had watched, with sudden concentrated attention, myself, this brain, unrolling from the seed like a genie from a bottle, and casting my eyes forward, I had
70 seen it vanish again into the formless alchemies of the earth.

For what then had I contended, weighing the serpent with the bird in that wild valley? I had struggled, I am now convinced, for a greater, more comprehensive version of myself.

Loren Eiseley
American anthropologist and writer

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